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ABSTRACT

This resource book (in English) is part of a series of early French immersion program teaching guides--all written in French--and is designed particularly for teachers who are new to the early immersion program. It is divided into three parts: (1) suggestions and practical information for teachers including questions and answers to frequent queries; (2) examples of methodology, including practical ideas for language arts, methods of dealing with limited French vocabulary in mathematics instruction in kindergarten and grades 1 and 2, use of basic vocabulary and practical experience in social studies, and suggestions for the first three weeks in grade 1 immersion; and (3) references for parts 1 and 2. One appendix provides a list of French newspapers and periodicals, organizations, audiovisual materials, book stores, cultural groups, and miscellaneous sources of information. A second appendix presents the document, "Research Findings from French Immersion Programs across Canada: A Parent's Guide," by Jim Cummins of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. A selected bibliography completes the volume. (AMH)

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Early French Immersion
Immersion française précoce

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Teacher's Resource Book

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Preamble

This document is primarily designed for teachers who are new to the Early Immersion program.

It is intended to offer some examples of methodology with suggestions and practical information based upon frequently expressed concerns.

The content and specific objectives for each of the subjects appear in the guides that have been developed for the Early Immersion program.

Notes

Early French Immersion Immersion française précoce

Part I

Suggestions and Practical Information for Teachers

1. *Is there an Early Immersion curriculum authorized and provided by the Ministry of Education?*
   What does it consist of?

   YES. Specific guides are available for the following subjects:

   — Mathématiques
   — Sciences humaines
   — Sciences de la nature
   — Arts plastiques
   — Musique
   — Éducation physique
   — "Français"

   In addition to the above, there is a guide for Kindergarten and lists identifying library books, materials and films. The guides indicate the core and supplementary materials for all subjects.

2. *What is the availability of resource materials?*

   Publication Services Branch stocks the materials appearing on the authorized list.

   School districts and school administrators can submit orders in the same manner as required for the regular English materials through the credit allocation system.

3. *What other resources are available in B.C. for Immersion teachers?*

   SEE ANNEX A — page 17.

4. *How can we best help learning disabled children in immersion programs?*

   (SEE ANNEX B — for research information concerning children with learning disabilities in the French Immersion program — pages 27-30).

   The teacher sometimes has to seek remedial services. If no remedial teacher is available the teacher should enroll the parents' help. Although most parents don't speak French, they can help their child with drills in spelling and math. The teacher's aides and French monitors are also available. They can take the child aside, have him/her read a text selected by the teacher, finish an assignment or give him/her drills in reading or math. One must not forget the other children in the class; the quicker ones can help the others by acting as a substitute teacher directing a game (ex: horse, race. . . in

order to shake the dice, the child must read a work, answer a question. . .) By enrolling everyone's cooperation and by giving the chance to those learning disabled children to help also (ex: moving the gym material) the teacher can keep harmony in the classroom and give the children the feeling that they all belong. In addition, a Language Master can be useful with teacher prepared materials. It can teach the child the vocabulary or sentence structures which he has not yet mastered. It can also help him drill his reading. A listening centre can be helpful when tapes are well prepared to help pupils gain certain abilities and concentration.

5. *It is preferable for the same French Language Arts program to be taught throughout the elementary immersion years?*

   It is possible to have a combination of Language Arts programs, one for the primary grades and one for the intermediate levels. It is suggested that the change be made only at the end of the primary levels. That is not to say that other reading materials cannot be used for oral reading, for enrichment and as an aid to slow learners. A great deal of reading material(s) should be available to children in a reading center so as to expose children to as much reading material as possible.

6. *How can a teacher deal with the listening skills?*

   Experience indicates that listening skills should be stressed and taught on an ongoing basis. The following paragraphs indicate a few examples of some possible strategies:

   — Every day, the teacher should read a story or part of a story (to be continued) to the children. Stories are continued on T.V., why not in the classroom? Even short stories with same characters appearing are of great interest to smaller children. Don't we have that as proof when children start reading "The Hardy Boys". We must always make sure the story is of great interest to pupils because pupils could develop bad habits of not listening also. We must not be afraid of putting aside a book that is of no interest to pupils. The story should of course be adapted to their level of comprehension. The teacher then should ask questions to check their understanding.
   — Songs and "comptines" should be taught often. In the reading method, "Le Sablier", a new sound is always introduced in a "comptine" or a song. These contain new words with the sound being studied. Children memorize these songs or "comptines" very quickly and use some of the new words or expressions in their everyday conversation.
   — Films, filmstrips and slides with soundtracks will sharpen the child's listening skills: for example, series of records (fairy tales and children's stories) with a picture book to go along with the record. The children can listen to the stories while looking at

the pictures. The teacher can also prepare a story on tape followed by a series of questions or some instructions to follow on a stencil provided for such a purpose:

Ex: — trouver la chemise, la colorier (bleue, rouge)...
— dessiner une lampe, sur la table...

- There are numerous games to improve the children's listening skills, for example:
  - Simon dit...
  - Les enfants doivent trouver des mots qui riment
  - Les enfants lèvent la main quand ils entendent le son "ou"
  - Les enfants trouvent des mots commençant par "b"
  - "Chapeau vole... — avion vole"
- The teacher names an object, the children raise their hands if the object flies.
  - Je pense à une personne
- The children ask different questions to identify a person in the classroom — the teacher can only answer by "oui" or "non".
- Insist that the students always use complete sentences.
- The teacher's guides for French* as a second language have many suggestions and games that could be easily adapted to the French Immersion program.

7. *What techniques can be used to assure the ongoing acquisition of oral French?*

Children in an Immersion program need opportunities to express themselves orally. Discussion groups, especially at the intermediate level are most helpful. Starting each day with an informal "warm-up" session is an excellent idea. Topics can be varied: for example, the student can tell the class what he had for breakfast, what went on before school, about an event that occurred the previous evening, etc. Teachers should try to make this interesting and informative so that the children look forward to this period of oral conversation.

When telling a story always take time to listen to children's experience in relation to the story. At times it may seem like a waste of time because we want to finish the story. There's often a tomorrow. We must always remember we must get the pupils expressing themselves orally in French.

*Ministry of Education: "Resource Center Catalogue".

Oral games, puppet shows written by the students themselves, dialogues, plays, "comptines" and songs should also become a very important part of the day.

Other useful techniques that can be utilized are:

1) films followed by oral discussion and question period
2) comprehension exercises followed by oral questions
3) discussions following T.V. or radio programs
4) filmstrips, cassettes and read-along records
5) children make a sentence after being shown a picture or an object
6) discussions including vocabulary enrichment of principal holidays, and special events (Hallowe'en, Christmas, etc.)
7) the date on a daily basis (to teach days of the week, months of the year, etc.)
8) the weather, temperature, etc.
9) structure drills: see pages 9-12.
10) show and tell: here pupils present an object and then other pupils ask questions or express feelings about the objects. Encourage pupils to find a new question that no one has thought of asking.

Because the program demands so much time for oral skills, it is important that conversation be stressed.

8. *Should English be spoken in an Immersion class?*

In Kindergarten where the children have had no previous experience in French, it will be necessary for the teacher to resort to English at times, particularly at the beginning of the year. Children communicate with one another in English, but use French more as the year continues.

After the second year (in general) in French immersion, the pupils have acquired sufficient vocabulary to make it unnecessary for them to use English in the classroom.

In the intermediate grades, where children have a good working knowledge of French, it is totally unnecessary to speak English.

9. *Is there a necessity for reading groups?*

There is as much necessity for reading groups at the primary and intermediate level in French Immersion as there is the English program. Reading groups are necessary for oral reading and comprehension.

By working with groups, the teacher will find it easier to communicate with the children on a personal level, and spot the areas of difficulty more quickly. The children are given assignments that are tailored to their abilities. They can help one another and those who work faster are kept busy and challenged.

10. *How can a teacher aide be used with maximum effectiveness?*

Having a teacher aide in the class is an invaluable help. Here are a few examples of activities in which they can be involved:

a) reading a story during library period
b) reading a story during class story-time
c) helping with games to develop vocabulary and skills
d) helping with drills in reading, vocabulary, math
e) helping out at learning centers
f) giving a slow-learner individual attention
g) providing some enrichment for gifted children
h) helping children in their research, in their composition
i) helping out on field-trips
j) assisting a child of non-French background who enters the French Immersion Program, in grade 1 or grade 2
k) making classroom materials.

11. *Are learning centers effective in the French Immersion situations?*

Learning centers are as effective in the French Immersion program as they are in the English program. In most cases the earliest they should be started is January of Grade 1.

The instructions given to the children should be very clear and concise so that they can be easily followed.

The help of the teacher aide or a monitor, or a French speaking parent is valuable in a learning center. The adult is there to help and insist that the children speak French.

In the teacher's guides for the French Immersion, devised by the Carleton Board of Education*, Margaret Tourond explains very clearly how to set up the centers, what activities to choose, etc.

12. *How does a teacher establish contact(s) and interaction with the students and parents?*

Establishing contacts with parents is usually easy for French Immersion teachers. Parents with children in an Immersion class, are generally interested and concerned with what the child is learning. Since parents who do not speak French may have difficulty in following their child's progress, the teacher should make a special effort to keep them informed. Otherwise parents might tend to compare too closely the progress of their child with that of children in the regular English program.

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*Carleton Board of Education Curriculum guides French Immersion grade one, two, three; see bibliography, pages 15-16.

Various types of meetings with parents can be organized:

- early in the school year, the teacher can present his/her program to the parents;
- a lesson where the parents become the students;
- an evening with parents together with their children and the teacher.

Teachers in French Immersion should be prepared to spend a great deal of time with parents. At times, this will seem unnecessary but most parents know little about the program and frequent contact with the teacher reassures them that they have made the right choice. As in any school situation, teachers should not hesitate to contact parents should a problem occur, be it academic or disciplinary. Parent volunteer programs can also provide a valuable means of contact.

13. *How does a teacher deal with a student showing a negative attitude toward French Immersion?*

In early French Immersion, the situation does not occur too often. When a child enters Kindergarten, school is something new to him/her and it is up to the teacher to create a welcoming atmosphere. The child should feel confident in the new environment, then he/she will relax and be ready to learn. When the child is disturbed or hurt, the teacher may choose to speak in English, to give him/her reassurance, and to find out the reason for the distress.

14. *How can one encourage the children to talk to each other in French?*

Teachers should never lose sight of the fact that learning a second language demands much effort on the part of the child. We must be prepared to be acutely aware of a child's needs, fears, and anxieties. Children respond positively to praise so the teacher must remember to use this on every occasion possible. Some positive strategies are:

- the reward system; e.g. a star or such can be given at the end of the day to those who have spoken no English during class time;
- to avoid speaking English in front of the children;
- to set a short term goal as a group project, group competition;
- preparation for a francophone project;
- individual daily graphs for the few students who need special encouragement;
- enlist the cooperation of the group in encouraging reticent members of the group to speak French.

15. *Are there ways to encourage students to use correct language spontaneously?*

For the second language to be used spontaneously, it is essential that particular attention be paid to the frequent repetition of essential structures.

Games involving mime are very effective in encouraging children to use language spontaneously from the point at which children are capable of using French at all times — usually by the end of Grade one, the use of French should be enforced.

It is suggested that a discussion with the children should be held. The children themselves should be encouraged to suggest why this rule is necessary and what the consequences of breaking it should be.

Teachers should make frequent use of mime and visual aids to explain new vocabulary, expressions or sentences. Teachers should make use of books on language games and examples found in teachers' guides for FSL.

The main way of communicating meaning of the French language is the French language itself, e.g. synonyms, associations, descriptions, reference to previous experience, etc.

16. *In what way is evaluation of students in the Immersion program different from that of students in the regular English program?*

Evaluation is ongoing and formative as in the regular English program.

17. *How should student progress be recorded?*

The type of recording system is a matter of school board policy. It is similar in Immersion and regular programs.

18. *What extra-curricular activities (in French) can be suggested for students?*

In recent years, there have been far greater opportunities for French-speaking children here in B.C. to enrich their school life. There are French plays, puppet shows, and French-Canadian celebrations put on by Franco-Columbian organizations. French films are increasingly available. Many large organizations, such as Radio-Canada in Vancouver have French speaking guides. The Centre Culturel Colombien in Vancouver has resource people available who visit the classrooms and show slides, organize puppet shows and hold workshops in arts and crafts.

It is also a good idea to solicit the help of French-speaking persons in your community, (policeman, baker, musician, etc.) to visit the children in class.

Teachers teaching intermediate grades can take part in "l'école verte" camping for 2 or 3 days with all games and activities planned in French. Teacher's aides, monitors, and French-speaking parents can help here.

The Ministry has also prepared a catalogue regarding cultural activities which may be consulted.

Encourage pupils to watch specific French T.V. programs suited to them and perhaps have a follow-up.

19. *Can a child enter the French Immersion program after grade one?*

As a general rule, students entering Immersion after grade one will have had some French background or be French-speaking. In the event that a child enters the program with minimum background, extra demands are placed on the teachers. They must be prepared to handle the situation in a very special way. A child will quickly feel self-conscious when placed in a classroom situation with which he/she is not familiar. He/she cannot understand the teacher or his classmates. The reader is completely incomprehensible to him/her. He/she feels "different" and lost. This is where the role of the teacher is tremendously important. She/he must be prepared to give the child extra time, but not to the detriment of the rest of the class. An attitude of friendliness, understanding, and warmth is important. Where feasible, the student could be given help by the learning assistant.

It may also be recommended that students entering without minimal background, be provided with private tutoring outside the school.

20. *To what extent should language errors be corrected and how should this be done?*

The aim in French Immersion is to teach children to speak French as fluently and as correctly as possible as well as to teach subject matter. With these aims in mind, we should be aware that children, especially at the Primary level, do not usually possess the precise vocabulary or sentence structure necessary. Teachers should be methodical and judicious in the selection of common errors to be corrected.

It is probably not advisable to correct children's errors every time one is made, (refer to #15 above).

Early French Immersion Immersion française précoce

Part II

Examples of Methodology

1. Suggestions for Teaching Language Arts in French Immersion

A. Some practical ideas

1. In order to give each child sufficient active practice of basic oral structures, the teacher should make as much use as possible of the techniques of structure drilling used in FSL methodology.

   e.g. class repetition, group repetition, individual repetition. Structure drilling may be conducted for short periods (less than 10 minutes) several times a day. This procedure is useful throughout Early Immersion but particularly at the primary level.

2. Before asking a child to read a text orally, be it in a group or to the class, the teacher may first present the vocabulary by means of audio-visual aids, mimes, etc.

   Otherwise, he/she may have to interrupt too often to give an explanation and the children may lose the continuity of the story.

3. The teacher should, as much as possible, include the vocabulary and expressions encountered in the readers and workbooks in everyday conversation. That vocabulary will thus become "active" instead of remaining passive.

   e.g. The children have read the word "chuchoter". Whenever they speak too loudly, the teacher whispers, "chuchotez".

4. To reinforce the learning of words, the children could have a copy book entitled "Mon dictionnaire", in which they could write new words with a drawing or a picture.

   This dictionary could be used as a resource book and prove useful when the children write sentences or compositions.

5. In grade one, some children have difficulty in writing a well constructed sentence. Oral practise always preceeds the written exercise. Here are some suggestions:

   a) substitution exercises —
      - The teacher has a board with groups of words.
      - He/she changes one word or group of words to another to stimulate the student's interest.
      - He/she can use the names of children in the class.

      e.g. Marie a une pomme
      Marie *mange* une pomme
      Luc mange *un biscuit* etc.

— Once the little children have understood the exercise they can form new sentences by themselves and record them.
— This exercise could easily be adapted for a learning station.

b) — The children have to put back in order, a sentence broken in 2, 3 elements.
— The difficulty can be increased gradually.

e.g. Galope dans le pré le cheval
de Mimi la jupe Léa regarde

c) Developing sentences using context clues:

e.g. Le petit garçon va à l'école.

Le petit		à l'école	de bonne heure
Le joli	garçon va	à la maison	le mardi
Le grand		au magasin	

The exercise is first explained and done orally. Once the children understand, the teacher asks them to write the different possibilities.

6. For silent reading, there are numerous exercises to check the children's comprehension.

— questions about the next
— the child reads the sentence and draws it
— the child matches the picture to the sentence
— he/she puts the sentences back in a logical order
— the child produces a drawing by following written instructions.

7. Listening stations are useful tools to develop aural skills. The teacher or the aide could tape a short story with a series of questions. The children answer by true or false on a stencil prepared ahead of time. Spelling exercises could be given the same way, the children writing down the words or sentences they hear on the tape.

The Provincial Education Media Centre* has developed some programs originally intended for the French exposure program but they could easily be used in French immersion. "Faites vos jeux", is a series of cassettes with exercises for grade one - grade two, "First French" would be suitable for grade 3, 4 and "À Propos" for 5, 6.

8. A problem encountered at the lower level is the availability of suitable extra-readers easy enough but interesting to young children.

*Available from Brault et Bouthillier.

The children can invent a collective story, each of them draws one part of the story, the teacher types it, the pages are laminated and stapled together to form a book for everyone to enjoy.

9. Aural discrimination exercises should start very early in Kindergarten and be used throughout the primary grades.

"Au pays du langage" by Archambault et Vallée* is a good way to teach phonems to young children. Children learn to recognize the phonem and its position within the word. Some children have difficulty differentiating sounds like b/d/p, f/v, ou/u and need a lot of practice. As long as they have not mastered that particular skill, they will experience some difficulty in spelling (ex: the teacher dictates ruche, the child writes rouche).

"La Maison des Sons", de Fernand Nathan, is also another good reference to use.

2. Dealing with Limited French Vocabulary (in Math, Science and Music).

A. When teaching mathematics, it is up to the teacher to make the problem as concrete and as real as possible with visual aids, manipulative materials, etc. As in all subject areas, the vocabulary might need to be adapted or simplified. For example, the book "La Mathématique à l'élémentaire 3e année" contains difficult problems for the students to understand. The teacher cannot just assign a page to the children, he/she has to explain the words carefully and check the students' comprehension.

As in any regular program, the teacher should always start from the concrete and go to the abstract. It is even more crucial in the French Immersion program since one has to make sure that children understand the wording before they understand the concept.

B. In Kindergarten, grade one and grade two, children have a very limited vocabulary. Again, we must limit our explanations and start from very concrete situations that children can identify with. The material should not be elaborate but come from the child's surroundings. Since children learn best when they are "doing", they need the opportunity to manipulate and experiment.

*Available from Brault et Bouthillier.

3. Social Duties in French Immersion

A. Using basic vocabulary

In order to achieve favorable results, we must realize that one of the most important aspects of the Social Studies program at all levels of French immersion, is the introduction and subsequent use of new and useful vocabulary. This vocabulary should become a functional part of the child's every day conversation.

B. Making use of practical experiences

Teachers can seek the help of French-speaking people in the area and resource people from Francophone organizations. For example, children can be taken on guided tours of police stations and some RCMP detachments having French speaking officers. The social studies program is intended to be a very practical, living experience for the children.

The grade 1 program is entitled "The family". As the children of this level are still self oriented, it is a good idea to start with topics related directly to the child.

e.g. Book about me
- — child brings in a picture of himself as a baby and draws himself as he is now
- — what he plans to be
- — his immediate family — parents, siblings, pals
- — expanded to relatives — then neighborhood

The Social studies program begins with the child as a person, and proceeds to the world and its people. A program of this nature allows the child to acquire an enormous amount of functional French.

4. Suggestions for the First Three Weeks in Grade One Immersion

A. First of all, we assume that the children went through French Kindergarten and that they have a basic knowledge of French. Quite often, some children come from the regular program as well. These children feel lost for a period of time but they have a great capacity to adapt. They will imitate their classmates when the teacher is giving directions and will be able to cope within a few weeks. In teaching a grade one student who had no previous French experience, the procedure to follow would be the same.

B. Review, routines and activities

It is advisable to start by explaining the school routines in English, in order to avoid problems later on. For example, for the children who never had recess before, it is necessary to instruct them to come back when the bell rings, otherwise, the teacher could well be the only one left in the classroom at end of recess. Fire drills should also be explained in English.

The teacher stresses French spoken in the classroom, addressing the children in French. Students should be expected to answer in French to the best of their ability and are discouraged from speaking English among themselves.

Whether or not the students had French Kindergarten, children forget a great deal during the holidays and it is a good idea to start by a review of the basic kindergarten vocabulary.

C. Psychomotor exercises

Psychomotor exercises are very important to train the child to read by developing his coordination and visual perception. The method "Le Sablier" has a workbook entitled "Cahier de psychomotricité 1re année". La Méthode Dynamique reading method has a series of exercises "fiches de pré-apprentissage", which are intended for Kindergarten but could be used successfully in grade one. Mariane Frostig has a series of three workbooks of increasing difficulties.*

Studies have shown that the maximum development of visual perception occurs between age three and a half and seven and a half. Some children who enter grade one have not yet reached the level of maturity necessary to cope with the school requirements and they need help. It is better to prevent than to cure and that's exactly what the psychomotor activities are doing. The exercises can be presented to the whole class or to children grouped according to their ability. The teacher must observe the children while they are doing the exercises in order to spot any difficulty. To be of any value, the exercises must be corrected immediately in front of the child. The teacher must not castigate the child but draw his attention to the mistake and ask the child to think of a better answer.

Since it is better to teach a child to avoid mistakes than to teach him to correct them, the exercises must be of gradual increasing difficulty!

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*Tasset-Ledou, *Cahier de psychomotricité*, Le Sablier Inc.

*Méthode Dynamique de l'enseignement de la lecture, *Fiches de pré-apprentissage*, Distribution Harigan.

*M. Frostig, *Images et modèles, le programme de développement de la perception visuelle*, McGraw Hill.

D. Attention span

The first few weeks set the tone in the classroom. Teachers must be understanding but firm. They must remember that the attention span of young children is very short so the activities must be changed often. Teachers must establish a positive atmosphere in the classroom, a climate of cooperation in which the teacher helps the child and the child helps the teacher. The teacher's approval must become the child's stimulation to learn but later, the child will want to learn for the pleasure of learning.

E. Suggested timetable for grade one (an example)

9:00 - 9:10	Opening exercises (O Canada - weather - date - register)	
9:10 - 9:30	Show and Tell - oral conversation	
9:30 - 10:30	French Language Arts	
10:30 - 10:45	Recess	
10:45 - 11:30	Math	
11:30 - 12:00	Learning Centres - Music	
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch	
1:00 - 1:45	French Language Arts	
1:45 - 2:00	Free activities - games	
2:00 - 3:00	Monday:	French (activities) Phys. Ed.
	Tuesday:	Math (activities) Library
	Wednesday:	Phys. Ed. French (activities)
	Thursday:	Social Studies Science
	Friday:	Art

References for Part I and Part II

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— Programme d'immersion précoce, guides de français: maternelle, 1re année, 2e année — Victoria, B.C. 1980.

— Catalogue du Centre de Ressources.

— Culture canadienne française — Quelques adresses utiles.

— Maisons d'éditions: adresses utiles et matériel didactique.

Inquiries on the above references should be addressed to:

Ministry of Education
French Language Services
7900 Alderbridge Way
Richmond, British Columbia
V6X 2A5

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Annex A

Annex A

1. French Newspapers and Periodicals

Le Soleil
3213 Cambie Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V5Z 2W3

The only French weekly newspaper in B.C. Each issue contains a special page for children to which schools can contribute.

E.L.A.N.
105-2235 Burrard Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V6H 3H9

Periodicals of the B.C.A.T.M.L. B.C. Teachers of Modern Languages sent periodically to the members.

Français — INFO

B.C. Ministry of Education, French Language Services: — occasional newsletter dealing with French activities, programs, committees, etc.
Write to: 7451 Elmbridge Way
Richmond, B.C., V6X 1B8

2. Organizations

Alliance Française
6161 Cambie Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V5Z 3B2

L'Association des Francophones de Nanaimo
75 Front
Nanaimo, B.C. V9R 5H9
(112) 754-5732

Centre Bon Accueil de Powell River
4695, avenue Marine
Powell, River, B.C.
V8A 2L2
(112) 485-2031

Centre des Canadiens-Français de Prince-George
Studio 2880-2880, 15e avenue
Prince-George, B.C. V3K 1V3
(112) 562-5819

Centre Culturel Colombien
795, 16e avenue ouest
Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 1S8
874-9105

Centre Culturel Français de l'Okanagan
208 - 1823 avenue Harvey
Kelowna, B.C. V1Y 6G4
(112) 860-4974

Centre Culturel Français de Vernon
B.P. 1512
Vernon, B.C.
V1T 8C2
(112) 545-4636

Centre Francophone d'Alberni
4006 - 8e avenue
Port Alberni, B.C. V9Y 4S4
(112) 723-5328
(112) 724-0212

Club de l'Âge d'Or de Vancouver
3150 Willow Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V5Z 3P5
876-2877

Club Les Amis
10-11113, 13e avenue
Dawson Creek, B.C. V1G 3W9
(112) 782-3672

Fédération des Franco-Colombiens
104-853, rue Richards
Vancouver, C.B.
V6B 3B4

French Consulate
736 Granville Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V6Z 1G3

Société de la Francofête
1013, avenue Brunette
Maillardville, C.B. V3J 6Z4
525-3331
526-7500

Club Canadien-Français de Victoria
854 Caledonia No 1
Victoria, B.C.
V8T 1E6
(112) 383-5335

Conseil Culturel Franco-Colombien
980 Raymer Road
Kelowna, B.C.
V1Y 4Z7

Fédération Jeunesse Colombienne
103-853, rue Richards
Vancouver, C.B.
V6B 3B4

Le Réveil Francophone de Kamloops
426, Victoria
Kamloops, C.B. V2C 2A7
(112) 372-3646
573-5072

Société Historique Franco-Colombienne
1204, 1650, Burnaby
Vancouver, C.B. V6G 1X3
687-0137
228-4415

3. Films, Records and A.V. Materials

National Film Board
1161 West Georgia
Vancouver, C.B.
V6E 3G4

Office National du Film du Canada
811, rue Wharf
Victoria, C.B.
V8W 1T2
(604) 388-3868

Radio-Canada (Radio & T.V.)
700 Hamilton
Vancouver, C.B. V6B 2R5
665-8039

Office National du Film du Canada
545 Quebec Street
Prince-George, C.B. V6L 1N6
(604) 564-5657

Praise Records of Canada Ld.
6979 Curragh Avenue
Burnaby, B.C. V5J 4V6
Box 2307 Vancouver, B.C.
(604) 434-9611

P.E.M.C.
7451 Elmbridge Way
Richmond, B.C. V6X 1B8
278-3433

4. Book Stores Supplying French Materials

Le Bouquineur
1222 Robson Street
Vancouver, C.B.
V6E 1C1

Au Croque-Bouquins
795, 16e avenue ouest
Vancouver, B.C.
V5Z 1S8

Teacher's Store
4480 Halifax Street
North Burnaby, C.B.

5. Cultural Groups

La Chorale Chante-Clair
833 Alderson
Maillardville, C.B.
V3K 1V3
934-7039

Le Théâtre de Danse Immram
302 - 227 W. Pender
Vancouver, C.B. V6B 1T3
669-4497
682-4339

Les Échos du Pacifique
2055 Concorde
Coquitlam, C.B. V3K 1K4
526-7500
596-1566

La Troupe de la 16ème
112 W. Hastings - 4th floor
Vancouver, C.B. V6B 1G8
669-4418
873-1796

6. Miscellaneous

B.C. Association of Learning
Materials & Educational
Representatives
(B.C.A.L.M.E.R.)
1622 West - 7th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C. V6J 1S5
(604) 734-2011

Canadian Parents for French
B.C. Chapter Executive
3250 Cornwall Street
Port Coquitlam, C.B.
V3B 3G7

Notes

Early French Immersion Immersion française précoce

Annex B

Annex B*

Research Findings from French Immersion Programs Across Canada: A Parent's Guide

Jim Cummins
The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

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Immersion education refers to the use of a language other than the child's home language as a medium of instruction. Fifteen years ago this type of educational program was almost nonexistent in Canada. Today immersion programs are in operation in every province and every major city from St. John's, Newfoundland to Victoria, B.C. The vast majority of these programs use French and English as media of instruction. However, bilingual programs involving a variety of other languages also exist. For example, in Edmonton, Alberta, Ukrainian, German, Hebrew and Cree programs are offered at the elementary level.

The first reaction of many parents to the idea of learning through the medium of a second language is one of incredulity. It is assumed that even if children in an immersion program do become reasonably fluent in French (or whatever the second language is) they will lose out somewhere along the line. Surely, children's achievement in English and other school subjects must suffer when a large proportion of school time is spent through French; some parents also fear that mental confusion will result from the necessity to think through two languages; or, even if logical thinking is unaffected, maybe immersion in a second language environment will stunt the child's spontaneity and power of creative thinking. Other parents wonder what the effects on the child's emotional adjustment will be.

Even parents who are familiar with the general trend of the research results often wonder whether such a program is suitable for *their* child. Are immersion programs suitable only for extremely bright children or can average or below average children benefit just as much? Should children who have speech or language disorders consider enrolling in an immersion program? How about the child who speaks a third (i.e., non-English, non-French) language at home?

Another issue which is sometimes raised is whether or not French immersion programs are equally successful in totally anglophone areas as they are in areas where there is more opportunity to use French outside of school (e.g. Montreal, Ottawa). Underlying any discussion of the effects of immersion is the question of how the different program options compare with one another. First, then, it is appropriate to describe the major varieties of French immersion programs which are offered in Canada.

Varieties of French Immersion Programs

Three basic types of French immersion programs which aim to develop a high level of bilingualism can be distinguished:

(I) *Early total immersion*. The usual pattern of early total immersion is one where kindergarten and grade 1 are totally through French, one period of English language arts is introduced in grade 2 or 3, leading to approximately 50% of the time through English by grade 5 or 6. Reading is introduced in French.

(II) *Early partial immersion*. Kindergarten is usually through French, grades 1-6 are 50% English, 50% French. Reading is introduced in English.

(III) *Intermediate and late immersion*. Into this category can be grouped a variety of immersion programs which begin after the initial grades of elementary school (i.e., anywhere from grade 3 to grade 12). Late immersion programs (grade 7 up) are favoured by many school boards because they are easier to administer than early immersion programs. Children may or may not have taken regular French-as-a-second language courses ("core" FSL) before entry.

What are the "pros" and "cons" of each of these basic types of program? Specifically, how do they compare in relation to children's achievement in (a) French, (b) English, (c) other subjects, (d) intellectual development, (e) emotional and attitudinal development. To what extent are each of the programs suitable for all children?

French Achievement

Evaluations have shown that each of the three basic program types can be an effective route to bilingualism and, in terms of French achievement, it is not clear whether one program type is superior to the others.

It has been consistently found that by the end of elementary school early total immersion students approach native-like levels in French listening, comprehension and reading skills, although they are still clearly distinguishable from native francophones in speaking and writing skills. This is not surprising since their only source of French language input is the teacher. Sustained interaction with native francophone children appears to be necessary to develop native-like speaking abilities. This can be seen in the fact that English-speaking children in francophone schools in

Montreal are judged by their teachers to be almost indistinguishable from their francophone classmates in terms of French fluency, pronunciation and accent.

Comparisons of the French achievement of early total and partial immersion students show inconsistent findings. Students in a partial immersion program in Southern Ontario were found to gain proficiency in French considerably more slowly than total immersion students. However, the evaluation of the Ottawa Roman Catholic Separate School Board (ORCSSB) partial immersion program shows that, by grade 4, students' French proficiency is almost equivalent to that of their peers in total immersion. In this program each day is divided into morning and afternoon halves, one taught in English and the other in French by different teachers.

Recent comparisons of the French achievement of children in early total immersion and late immersion programs show somewhat surprising results. For example, it has been found in Montreal that children who have had six years of core French in elementary school and who enter an intensive grade 7 immersion program (80% French in grade 7 and 8) perform as well in listening, speaking, reading and writing French at the end of grade 8 as grade 8 children who have gone through an early total immersion program. Evaluations in Ontario confirm the viability of late immersion. Grade 10 students in a less intensive form of late immersion program starting at grade 8, who have 1400 hours of cumulated instruction, perform better in listening comprehension, reading and writing, than grade 6 students in early total immersion who have had almost four times as many hours cumulative instruction.

These findings appear surprising because of the widespread belief that the younger child is a better language learner. Many recent studies show clearly that this widespread belief is a myth. Older children have been found to make much more rapid progress than younger children in acquiring most aspects of second language proficiency. An exception to this is the area of accent where younger children appear to have an advantage. The reason older children progress more rapidly in other aspects of second language learning is because of their greater intellectual maturity. Performance in the academic second language skills measured by most standardized tests is strongly related to overall intellectual level, and thus it is not surprising that older children should display an advantage on these measures. It is not possible to tell from the comparisons to date whether or not late immersion students are as proficient as early immersion students in French interpersonal communication skills in "real life" situations. However, the further development of these skills is likely to depend more on children's use of French outside the school context than in the classroom situation, once a certain level of French proficiency has been attained. Thus, there is little reason to expect that late immersion students will be any less proficient than early

immersion students in French interpersonal communication by the end of secondary school.

English Achievement

In early total immersion programs there are temporary lags in some aspects of English skills until formal English instruction is introduced. When English language arts is introduced, immersion students catch up to children in regular programs very rapidly, suggesting that considerable transfer of language skills takes place from French to English. It usually takes longer for children to catch up in the technical aspects of English skills, e.g. capitalization, spelling, etc., where the lag may persist until grade 3 or 4. However, it has been found in some evaluations that, despite the early lags, children in early immersion programs tend to perform *better* than children in regular programs on several aspects of English achievement by the end of elementary school.

In most early partial immersion programs little or no delay has been noted in the development of English language skills. Studies conducted within the context of partial immersion programs have also found differences in English language skills in favour of immersion students. However, the extent of beneficial effects on English may be a function of the amount of French students have learned. This is suggested by a study conducted in the Edmonton Public School System partial immersion program which compared grade 3 high French achievers, low French achievers, and regular program students on a series of English language processing tasks. The three groups had similar academic potential at the kindergarten level, but by grade 3 those children who had developed high levels of French proficiency also performed significantly better than the other two groups on several measures of English language processing.

In late immersion programs no differences have appeared between immersion and regular program students in English academic skills. However, less research has been conducted on this late immersion than in early immersion programs and the possibility of subtle benefits not be ruled out.

These results have two interesting implications. First, at least among middle-class anglophone children, the influence of schools on the development of English language skills appears to be less than was hitherto assumed. This is most convincingly illustrated in the study of anglophone children attending francophone schools in Montreal mentioned earlier. Despite the fact that for many children English language arts was not introduced until grade 5, children performed as well on measures of English achievement as comparable children in regular English schools. It appears that skills learnt through a second language can be easily transferred to the child's native language. Also, the main ingredient in the development of fluent reading comprehension is the vocabulary knowledge of the child which is much more

dependent on the child's environment outside the school (e.g. literacy level of the home) than it is on school factors.

The relevance of these results lies in the fact that in the past, some parents have opted for a partial immersion program rather than total immersion program because of fears regarding their child's English development. These fears appear to have little basis. The greater exposure to French in early total immersion has no detrimental effects on children's achievement in English.

The second implication is that it may be possible to devise teaching methods and programs which would exploit the child's knowledge of two languages. The research results showing a tendency for the immersion students to perform better on aspects of English skills are consistent with the results of a considerable number of studies which suggest that there may be some cognitive advantages associated with attaining high levels of competence in two languages. For example, it has been reported in several studies that bilingual children are better able to analyze aspects of language in comparison to unilingual children. It would not be at all surprising if this were the case in view of the enormous amount of analyzing and processing of language that must be involved in becoming bilingual. One possible explanation which has been suggested to account for the superior performance of bilingual children on some language tasks is that, as they acquire more proficiency in their second language, they begin to compare and contrast the ways in which their two languages organize reality, e.g. word orders, grammatical structures, vocabulary, pronunciation, etc. In other words, knowledge of a second language may help bring into focus aspects of children's first language of which they might otherwise be unaware. However, not all children in immersion programs are likely to engage in this form of contrastive analysis to the same extent. Some may do it consciously and explicitly, others not at all. Thus, there may be considerable potential for parents and teachers to devise means of encouraging children to become aware of similarities and differences in the ways in which they use French and English to express their thoughts. This type of approach might increase children's understanding of how language itself works. The ability and motivation to engage in this form of contrastive analysis is likely to be partially a function of the level of French competence which a child has attained.

Achievement in Other Subjects

Students in early total immersion programs have tended to perform as well as comparison groups in all school subjects other than English or French. In addition, they are able to transfer their knowledge from one language to the other. For example, when mathematics is taught through French, early immersion students perform equally well whether tested in English or French.

In one early partial immersion program in Ontario there were several instances of poorer performance in subject matter taught through French, especially in the later grades of elementary school. For example, the grade 6 students did not perform as well as their English-educated peers in either science or mathematics, possibly, as Merrill Swain suggests, because "their level of French was not adequate to deal with the more sophisticated level of mathematical and scientific concepts being presented to them in French."

By contrast, in the Ottawa partial immersion program, students have performed as well as comparison groups in all academic subjects. However, as noted earlier, students' French proficiency in the Ottawa program is almost as well-developed as that of early total immersion students.

In late immersion programs some temporary lags in subject matter thaught through French have been experienced but in no case has the difficulty been long-term. Usually, by the end of the second year of the program, students have caught up with their regular program peers in all subjects taught through French. There is some evidence that a relatively high degree of motivation may be necessary among late immersion students in order to "keep up" in subjects taught through French. This may be because due to the greater abstractness of curriculum content at this stage the "language barrier" is very evident whereas younger early immersion students "have overcome the language barrier before they even knew it existed" (H.H. Stern). Thus, although late immersion programs have been highly successful among students who are willing to work exceptionally hard, early immersion programs may be a more viable proposition for a larger number of students.

Intellectual Development

There has been no evidence that immersion programs have any negative effects on children's intellectual or creative development. Any differences that have been found have tended to favour children in immersion programs.

Emotional and Attitudinal Development

Studies have shown no evidence of any problems in emotional or social adjustment among students in any of the different types of immersion program. Children's introduction to early immersion programs is "gentle" in that they continue to express themselves in English in kindergarten — only the teacher speaks French. This experience builds up sufficient listening comprehension in French that when academic content is introduced in grade 1, children have little difficulty in following what is going on.

Studies of children's attitudes towards francophones have shown that children in immersion programs continue to maintain strong feelings of

identity with the anglophone group but they perceive less "psychological distance" separating themselves and francophone children than do children in regular programs.

How Successful Is Immersion in Totally Anglophone Areas?

Intuitively one might expect immersion to be more successful in bilingual cities such as Montreal or Ottawa-Hull than in totally unilingual areas. However, this does not appear to be the case. Evaluations have shown quite clearly that immersion programs can be highly successful anywhere in Canada. The reason why a bilingual location does not appear to confer any advantage is that, for the most part, children in immersion programs use little or no French outside of school. The only television programs they are likely to watch on the French channel are hockey games (when there are none on the English channel) or Saturday morning cartoons. In both these cases the visual image is to a large extent independent of the verbal accompaniment. However, studies have shown that although children in immersion programs tend not to actively seek out opportunities to use French outside of school, they feel relatively comfortable in situations where they are required to use French. In contrast, children in core FSL programs tend to feel threatened by such situations.

In summary, a major reason why immersion works just as well in a unilingual as compared to a bilingual environment is that students in immersion programs tend to make relatively little use of opportunities for using French outside the classroom. It is possible that highly motivated students in high school (who have been in either an early or late immersion program) may make more effort to use French outside of school if they perceive knowledge of French as playing a useful or desirable role in their life plans.

Are Immersion Programs Suitable for All Children?

There is no more reason to expect immersion programs to be the best possible educational program for all children than there is to expect regular English programs to be. However, despite a considerable number of studies addressed to the issue, research to date has failed to identify any category of student for whom immersion programs are not suitable.

Intelligence

Immersion programs are certainly *not* just for the very bright. Studies have consistently shown that although IQ is strongly related to the development of reading and writing skills in both early and late French immersion programs (as in regular programs), it is much less related to the development of French speaking skills. In other words, children of relatively low IQ develop as much fluency in French as high IQ children. Although this finding may appear surprising at first sight, it makes a lot of sense when one realizes that the immersion experience is designed to

mimic the process through which children learned their first language. Except in the case of some severely retarded or autistic children, virtually all children learn to communicate in their first language, irrespective of level of intelligence. Thus, there is no reason to expect that the acquisition of second language speaking skills in a French immersion program should be determined by a child's level of intelligence.

Home Background

It has also been found that children from working-class backgrounds and those who speak a third language at home appear to do well in immersion. In fact there is some evidence that children from certain linguistic backgrounds (e.g. Italian) may have an advantage in learning French because of the similarity between languages.

Motivation

As mentioned previously, a high level of motivation to learn French is probably a prerequisite for success in late immersion programs. This does not of course mean that a high level of motivation is not necessary in early immersion programs. It is; however, one can assume high motivation more easily at the kindergarten and grade 1 levels than one can in junior high and high school. The relatively concrete nature of the curriculum at the younger age level provides children with a "breather" in which to acquire sufficient French skills to master academic content; however, at the older age level students must be motivated to work extremely hard to overcome the language barrier and master the complex curriculum content being presented through French. Thus, late immersion programs may be suitable only for children who are motivated to work extra hard to succeed.

Learning Disabilities

It has been suggested by Dr. Ronald Trites of the Neuropsychological Laboratory at the Royal Ottawa Hospital that some children are more predisposed to develop learning disabilities in early immersion programs than they would be in a regular English program. Other researchers have not found Dr. Trites' evidence convincing. Dr. Maggie Bruck of the Montreal McGill Children's Hospital has conducted an extensive longitudinal study of children with language disabilities in early French immersion. She has found that these children do as well in immersion as comparable children in regular programs. In addition, they acquire fluent French skills. It is interesting to note that language disabled children experience considerable difficulty in core FSL courses. Some of the reasons which have been suggested to explain why these children perform relatively well in early total French immersion are (a) reading skills may be easier to acquire in French since sound-symbol relationships are more systematic in French than in English; (b) the language disabled child's self-esteem may be boosted by the fact that s/he is acquiring relatively fluent French skills, something that other siblings or peers may not have.

In summary, it is still an open question as to whether or not early French immersion programs are suitable for all children. However, research to date has provided no evidence that they are not. Late immersion programs may be less suited for all children because of the high level of motivation necessary to overcome the language barrier.

Should Children Who Experience Learning Problems in Early French Immersion Transfer out or Remain in?

Here again Dr. Trites and Dr. Bruck take opposing views. Dr. Trites argues that children who experience difficulties should be switched to an English program whereas Dr. Bruck suggests that the disadvantages associated with such a switch will usually far outweigh any benefits. Dr. Trites' case is weakened by the detailed statistical analyses in his report (Trites and Price, 1977) to the Ontario Ministry of Education. These analyses indicate that a large majority of children who switched to an English program repeated or dropped back a grade level, and, although they made good progress in reading and other subjects *in relation to the grade level which they repeated*, they fell further behind equivalent children who remained in French immersion in terms of the level of performance that would be expected on the basis of their age.

However, in statistical analyses it is easy to lose sight of the individual child and it is important to emphasize that when children encounter difficulties in French immersion, each case must be judged on its individual merits. What researchers can do is suggest some of the potentially important factors which should be considered by those who are responsible for deciding whether or not to transfer a child to an English program.

1. Parents and teachers should not assume that the French immersion program is to blame for a child's learning problems. There is no greater incidence of learning disability in French immersion than in regular programs and Dr. Bruck's evidence would suggest that children with problems in immersion would likely have experienced the same problems in a regular English program.
2. If a child has been unhappy for a prolonged period of time in an immersion program and wants to switch, then it is probably right to do so. However, one should consider the reasons for the child's unhappiness. If the child's relationship with a particular teacher is the source of the problem and the school year is almost finished, then transfer may not be necessary.
3. Transfer to an English program may damage a child's self-image and the stigma of failure may compound the learning problems.
4. When a child transfers to an English program in the early grades of elementary school, s/he will probably be even further behind than in the immersion program because of not having had any formal English instruction. Teachers in the regular program may resent the

extra work which tansferred children represent and thus harmonious learning relationships may be difficult to establish.

5. Despite problems in academic subjects, the child experiencing learning difficulties in immersion will usually be developing relatively fluent French speaking skills. Not only is this likely to boost his or her self-esteem since siblings or parents may not have acquired French, but it also represents an asset which will enhance future chances of personal satisfaction and economic success in present-day Canada. Immersion may be the only means through which such a child can acquire facility in French since s/he is likely to have the same difficulty in a core FSL program as s/he does in other academic subjects.

Thus, there are a number of factors to consider, and teachers and parents should not assume that a child who experiences difficulties in French immersion would necessarily be better off in a regular program. A sizeable proportion of children experience academic difficulties in any type of school program. Teachers must accept the fact that children in immersion programs also experience their share of difficulties, and they should individualize their program accordingly, rather than automatically taking the easy way out by transferring children to the regular program.

Further Information

1. *So You Want Your Child to Learn French!* (1979) A handbook for parents produced by Canadian Parents for French. Available from Canadian Parents for French, Terminal P.O. Box 8470, Ottawa, Ontario, K1G 3H6.

2. Seven special issues of the *Canadian Modern Language Review* have been published with financial assistance from the Secretary of State. These special issues deal with current Canadian research on immersion education and second language learning. The volumes still in print can be obtained free of charge from

   The Canadian Modern Language Review
   4 Oakmount Road
   Welland, Ontario L3C 4X8

   (i) Bilingualism in Education (out of print)
   (ii) Attitude and Motivation in Language Learning
   (iii) Immersion Education for the Majority Child
   (iv) Alternative Programs for Teaching French as a second Language in the Schools of the Carleton and Ottawa School Boards (out of print)
   (v) Needs Oriented Language Teaching
   (vi) Language Acquisition and Bilingualism in Education
   (vii) Proceedings of the First ACPI/CAIT Conference

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